

ON THE QUESTION OF THE LECTOTYPE OF "MEGATHYMUS ARYXNA"  
DYAR, 1905

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and

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(Commission's reference : Z.N.(S.) 889)

(For the application submitted in this case, see page 289 of the present volume)

(Letter dated 22nd February 1955)

The writers have given considerable thought to the proper application of the name *Megathymus aryxna* Dyar, 1905. Some of these thoughts have been expressed in our recent paper published in *The Lepidopterists' News*, 1954, page 77, entitled "Notes on *Megathymus neumoegeni*, with Description of a New Species (Megathymidae)". For convenience we will refer in this paper to the various species involved in the same manner as we did in the above mentioned publication.

To commence with at the time Dyar (1905) described *Megathymus aryxna* (*J. N.Y. ent. Soc.* 13 : p. 141) he probably was one of the few men who knew what true *Megathymus neumoegeni* Edwards was. In his description of *M. aryxna* he refers first to two specimens pictured at figures 3 and 4, Plate 69, of Vol. 3 of the Lep.-Het. Section of Godman & Salvin's *Biologia Centr.-Amer.* and then to ten specimens before him. These ten specimens before him were all from the State of Arizona, U.S.A. the two specimens referred to in *Biol. Centr.-Amer.* were from Mexico. Unfortunately the ten specimens before Dyar consisted of two species, six specimens of what we call Species No. 1 and four specimens of what we call Species No. 2. The two specimens in *Biol. Centr.-Amer.* appear to be Species No. 1—they are certainly not Species No. 2.

The literature thereafter is not helpful. The name *M. neumoegeni* Edwards is consistently applied to the above mentioned Species No. 1. This fact is most important in order properly to understand what happened thereafter.

Sometime in 1910 or shortly before then Barnes and McDunnough suggested to Dyar that Species No. 1 was *M. neumoegeni* and that he should restrict his name of *aryxna* to Species No. 2. This he did as explained in the following passage in our paper in the *Lepidopterists' News* (: 78), namely :—

to the extent of making a label as follows and attaching it to one specimen of Species No. 2 :—

*Megathymus*  
*aryxna*  
Cotype          Dyar  
(Sensu Restr.) (1910)

He never published his restriction but we believe that Barnes and McDunnough did in their paper of 1912 "Contrib. to the Natural History of the Lepidoptera of North America, Vol. 1 No. 3, Revision of the Megathymidae". At page 23, lines, 8, 9 and 10, Barnes and McDunnough say "... at our suggestion Dr. Dyar has restricted the name *aryxna* to the unnamed form of which fig. 1 represents a co-type". Their Figure 1 of Plate 1 is a picture of the specimen that Dyar attached the restricting label to. It is our opinion that this was a sufficient publication of the restriction and at that time the name *aryxna* became fixed.

Barnes and McDunnough did not then particularly help the situation by proceeding to say that the description of *aryxna* (as described by Dyar) did not fit the Species No. 2 which he restricted it to. *With this we can not agree.* Turn to our paper, Plate 2, top and second row—this is true *neumoegeni*—note how the veins do not have any dark coloring along the area of light coloration so that the light areas do not appear to be divided (by the veins) into spots. Now look at Plates 1, 2 and 3 at all of the males of the various other species involved (Dyar

had only males before him when he described *aryxna*) and note how the outer lines (of lighter color) are divided into spots (by the veins having dark coloring). Dyar's description is "It differs from *neumoegeni* in having the fulvous markings considerably reduced, the outer band being broken into spots". It is immediately evident that this description applies equally well to Species No. 1 as to Species No. 2. Hence we are not faced with the problem of the description not fitting the species.

As we see the situation there are two problems to be decided. 1. Does the description of *aryxna* fit the species as restricted by Dyar. 2. Is the restriction of Dyar valid. The answer to both questions in our opinion, is yes.

There is no great problem involved in the literature and the name *aryxna*. The name has only been used in about a dozen different publications. In about half of the publications the author was without information and it is impossible to determine what they were applying the name to. In our paper we have cited the literature in which the name is used in such a manner that you can determine whether the name was applied to Species No. 1 or Species No. 2.

We are unable to give the importance to the fact that Dyar mentioned the two specimens in *Biol. Centr.-Amer.* before he did the ten before him that Bell and Dos Passos do in their recent paper "The Lectotype of *Megathymus Aryxna* Dyar (Lepidoptera, Megathymidae)" American Museum Novitates, No. 1700, Dec. 20, 1954, published shortly after our paper. If this priority is important, then by the same token, Fig. 3 becomes the key—not Fig. 4. To us it appears that Dyar was describing a new species from Arizona—not from Mexico, the specimens before him were what he was describing—he was merely referring to the specimens in the *Biol.* as being the same thing. Even should it be determined that his restriction was not valid we feel it would be an error to designate either of the Mexican specimens as the lectotype.

While the writers feel that the foregoing is the correct situation in regard to the proper application of the name *aryxna* we would not at all be adverse to a waiver of the rules so that the name *aryxna* could be applied to Species No. 1, leaving the name *M. evansi* Freeman available to Species No. 2. This would probably mean, of course, that the lectotype of *aryxna* would then be designated as the Mexican specimen, following Skinner—which we do not feel was the intention of Dyar.

#### SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO DESIGNATE FOR THE GENUS "SCORPIO" LINNAEUS, 1758 (CLASS ARACHNIDA), A TYPE SPECIES IN HARMONY WITH ACCUSTOMED USAGE

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Bei dieser Gelegenheit möchte ich Ihnen noch mitteilen, dass ich Ihre Ausführungen über die Gattung *Scorpio* und ihre typische Art mit grossem Interesse gelesen habe. Ihr Antrag ist nachdrücklich zu unterstützen, zumal es sich bei *Scorpio europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758, um eine völlig unsichere Art handelt.